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[0011] This object is achieved [by a microscope as defined by the features of Claim 1, and] in a microscope of the general type having an illumination device for illuminating a subject by directing light along an illumination beam path through a main objective of the microscope or in a region of a main objective of said microscope, and a plurality of optical components in the illumination beam path, by providing a mechanism for moving at least one of the optical components so that a darkening occurs at the subject because of the movement of the optical component. This object is also achieved by a related method [as defined by the features of Claim 5] comprising the step of moving at least one of the plurality of optical components so that a darkening occurs at the subject because the movement of the optical component causes light to arrive at the subject in a more diffuse or defocused fashion.

[0016] [The dependent claims describe and protect further improvement actions.] An exemplary embodiment of the invention is presented in the drawings and the description pertaining to the Figures, and the appended claims define improvements according to the present invention.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 1-6 and 9-11 as follows:

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1. (amended) In a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device for illuminating a subject over a field of view by directing light along an illumination beam path through a main objective of said microscope or in a region

of a main objective of said microscope, and a plurality of optical components in said illumination beam path, the improvement comprising:

a mechanism for moving at least one of said plurality of optical components so that a darkening occurs at the subject because of the movement of said at least one optical component.

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2. (amended) The improvement according to claim 1, wherein said mechanism removes said at least one optical component from said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.
3. (amended) The improvement according to claim 1, wherein said mechanism changes a position of said at least one optical component in said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.
4. (amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a collector lens, and said mechanism includes a manually operable drive system for removing said collector lens from said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.
5. (amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a collector lens, and said mechanism includes a motorized drive system for removing said collector lens from said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.

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6. (amended) The improvement according to claim 2, wherein said plurality of optical components includes a mirror prism and a light-concentrating optical system adjacent thereto for conveying illuminating light through said main objective, and said mechanism removes at least a portion of said light-concentrating optical system from said illumination beam path.

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9. (amended) The microscope according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of optical components includes an assembly of optical elements in said illumination beam path, and said mechanism removes said assembly from said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.

10. (amended) The microscope according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of optical components includes an assembly of optical elements in said illumination beam path, and said mechanism displaces said assembly along said illumination beam path to cause said darkening.

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11. (amended) A method for darkening an illuminated subject under a microscope having a non-scanning illumination device with an integrated illumination beam path in which a plurality of optical components are arranged, said method comprising the step of:

moving at least one of said plurality of optical components so that a darkening occurs at the subject